

U of R physics professor becomes Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA) member

BY TIM SWITZER, LEADER-POST JANUARY 7, 2010

REGINA — Zisis Papandreou has always been proud of his University of Regina roots.

From the time he graduated from the school on through his years teaching there, the physics professors has never looked down on it.

And that pride got a boost this week when the U of R became the first university outside the United States to become a member of the Southeastern Universities Research Association (SURA), which conducts nuclear physics and technology commercialization research.

The group, comprised of more than 60 universities, operates the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility in Newport News, Va., with the U.S. Department of Energy.

The U of R's appointment to the group is about a lot more than just prestige, said Papandreou.

He noted that it will allow for "bridged positions" which will see professors trained in Virginia before working in Regina as well as allowing U of R professors and students to receive further funding for research projects and while on leave or sabbatical.

"Because SURA has a reach into information technology, coastal research and some of these other areas ... anybody at our university here can benefit from this partnership," said Papandreou, who will represent the U of R on the SURA board.

The U of R has already been heavily involved with the Jefferson Lab's GlueX project, which is attempting to understand the "nuclear glue" that holds all matter together.

Papandreou and his Regina colleagues are actually a part one of the biggest components of the project, a barrel calorimeter which measures energy.

"Where that can be used in the future practically, that's always hard to predict," said Papandreou. "But for example MRI machines were originally called nuclear magnetic resonance and was originally physicists in a lab trying to understand how to spin the particles in response to magnetic fields. Turned out it had a use that no one saw at the time."

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